

Mascot Research Assignment

Hammond/Miller
EGE 2012

Name: _____

DUE: Friday, September 14th

PART ONE: Read and annotate the documents. As you read, underline or highlight the reasons that the authors give as evidence against the mascots. If you have questions while reading, write them in the columns. When you have finished, look back at the pieces of evidence, and circle the most convincing reason each author offers.

PART TWO: Organize your documents. After reading and annotating the articles, fill in the chart below for each of the articles. Offer at least three reasons for each piece.

	Type of Mascot	Reasons for Controversy/Opposition
Document A		
Document B		
Document C		
Document D		
Document E		

PART THREE: Pick the three most convincing articles and write an 8-sentence paragraph that answers the following prompt –

What are three examples of controversial American mascots, and why have they been opposed?

Your final draft, due on Friday, September 14th, should be typed and printed. It should contain in-text citations when you refer to the documents. It should have a proper heading and be written in Times New Roman 12-point font and should be double-spaced. Huzzah!

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Document A

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October 14, 2010

Controversy Over Mascots at Ole Miss

By **ROBBIE BROWN**

Colonel Reb, meet your replacement.

On Thursday, the University of Mississippi announced the successor to its former mascot, a white-goateed, cane-toting Southern plantation owner that many have criticized as racist and anachronistic. The new mascot? The Rebel Black Bear.

Supporters of the old mascot were quick to find flaws. For one, an artist's design shows a brown bear, not a black one. The animal was chosen based on the short story "The Bear" by William Faulkner, himself a former student, in which a bear is killed. Not exactly inspiring on the football field. And how original is a bear mascot?

"There are many, many other schools with bears — U.C.L.A., Maine, Brown," said Brian Ferguson, a 2007 graduate and the director of the Colonel Reb Foundation, a group that supports bringing back the old mascot, which was retired from sporting event sidelines in 2003. "We might as well be called P.C.U. — Politically Correct University."

School administrators say they want to balance tolerance with tradition at Ole Miss (itself a nickname for a slave owner's wife). The school has discouraged Confederate battle flags at football games, discontinued "Dixie" as the unofficial fight song and raised enrollment of black students to 14 percent, from 5.8 percent in 1995 (though Mississippi is nearly 40 percent black).

Fans are divided over whether the university has become more open-minded or just too conscious of its reputation beyond the South. The committee of students that picked the mascot said it hoped to avoid any racial significance in the design. One finalist had gray-colored skin because, said Margaret Ann Morgan, 19, a committee co-chairwoman, "it is a combination of black and white."

The Rebel Black Bear won an online poll this month, with support from 62 percent of students, alumni, staff and faculty members and season ticket holders. That beat the two other finalists: Hotty Toddy (a muscular man named after the school cheer) and the Land Shark (an allusion to the football team's "voracious" defense).

As for Colonel Reb, his fans are not surrendering. The Colonel Reb Foundation's leaders will dress in replicas of his costume and tour the state next week, talking to members of the local news media and trying to reverse the school's decision. "We're not giving up," Mr. Ferguson said. "The Rebel Black Bear is just not the tradition we're used to at Ole Miss."



Document B

'Fighting Irish' moniker found offensive

By Letter to the Editor

Published: Wednesday, March 22, 2006

Updated: Tuesday, August 14, 2012 16:08

An open letter to Dr. Myles Brand and the Executive Committee of the NCAA -

On Feb. 3, 2006, the Tribune Wire Services reported that when Dr. Myles Brand was "asked why Fighting Irish is acceptable at Notre Dame but Fighting Sioux at North Dakota is not, Brand said, "We've never had any Irish people come to us and say, 'We find that offensive.'"

Let this letter serve then as your official notice that some of the Irish (I am one) are indeed offended by a mascot dressed as an undignified leprechaun, flitting and prancing all around the football field or basketball court. Beyond that, we take particular offense with the moniker "Fighting Irish." As an Irish-American Catholic and citizen of both the U.S. and the Republic of Ireland, I am truly insulted by these portrayals of my race, heritage, creed and culture.

The term "Fighting Irish" harkens back to the many past oppressions suffered by Irish Catholics, first in the Emerald Isle at the hands of British aggressors and then when Irish immigrants reached these U.S. shores. They experienced oppression and bigotry as they tried to assimilate into American culture. They not only felt extreme prejudice, but many were also victims at the hands of the Ku Klux Klan and similar hateful groups.

If, as you, Mr. Brand, have also stated, "the NCAA objects to institutions using racial/ethnic/national origin references in their intercollegiate athletics programs," then the NCAA should disallow Fighting Irish and their leprechaun mascot. By taking this stand against Notre Dame, the NCAA will demonstrate that "hostile and abusive" references will not just mean "hostile and abusive (with exemptions allowed)," but will truly attempt to meet its stated goal of no racial, ethnic or national origin references in their intercollegiate programs.

As a graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign, I find the NCAA's current ambiguous stance incomprehensible and an anathema to all reasoned persons. If Florida State's Chief Osceola is deemed to be "non-offensive," then how can you possibly rationalize that Chief Illiniwek, for instance, is hostile? Logic dictates that if one Indian Chief is approved then all should be allowed.

At this point, the NCAA only appears to be undeniably hypocritical. Let's correct that impression. It is unfathomable to think that "Fighting Sioux" is offensive and, somehow, in the eyes of the NCAA, that "Fighting Irish" is not.

Please do the right thing and either ban all references to racial/ethnic/national origins or just leave them all be.

Paul L. Richards March 21



Document C

New baseball season brings fresh protests against Cleveland Indians mascot

By Stephanie Siek, CNN

Cleveland (CNN) – It's the Cleveland Indians home opener and the grounds outside Progressive Field are a sea of red and blue jerseys. As the crowds of celebratory fans walk toward the ballpark's entrance, they pass a small group of protesters holding signs that say that the team's name and mascot, Chief Wahoo, are racist and offensive.

About 10 people stand in a small park next to the stadium, quietly holding signs that say "People Not Mascots" and "Stop Teaching Your Children Racism." Every once in a while, someone in the stream of baseball fans pauses to shout mockingly, "Chief Wahoo Rules!", "You killed Custer" or just "Shut up!"

Robert Roche, executive director of Cleveland's American Indian Education Center and a Chiricahua Apache tribal member, says it's been like this each of the 30-some years he's been protesting. The shouting gets angrier and more frequent the closer it gets to game time, with many of the hecklers fresh from the nearby bars.

"If you stand here long enough," Roche says, "you'll see that racism is alive and well in Cleveland."

Not long after, a man in dressed in a feather headdress, face paint and a sweatsuit airbrushed with images of Chief Wahoo walks past and makes faces at the protesters. People in the crowd around him break out in war whoops.

Local Native Americans and advocates have been protesting the name and mascot on Opening Day since 1973. They say calling a team the Indians plasters over the history of exploitation of indigenous people by the Americans who displaced and often mistreated them. They regard Chief Wahoo as even worse - the caricature of an American Indian with bright red skin, a toothy grin, hooked nose and feather headband plays on stereotypes of Native Americans.

Every year the protesters have spread the same message about the offensiveness of the team name and logo, and every year they face ambivalent and sometimes belligerent fans, who repeat the legend that the Indians team name was chosen to honor, not denigrate, Native Americans. It's a legend that every Cleveland-area baseball fan grows up with, and one that appears in the team's official storytelling.

According to a timeline on the Indians team website, the Indians name dates to 1915, when what had been the Cleveland Naps was renamed to honor an earlier player, Penobscot American Indian Louis Sockalexis. Messages left for a Cleveland Indians communications official on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday were not returned.

In an April 4 story about the controversy in the Cleveland Plain Dealer newspaper, team spokesman Bob DiBiasio said he respects protesters opinions, but as to whether the team symbols are racist or not, "it is an individual perception issue... When people look at our logo, we believe they think baseball."

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Offensive Team Names

by Jay Johansen

Document D

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As perhaps you've heard, the National College Athletic Association has announced a policy calling for an end to references to American Indians in team names, logos or mascots. They explained that "an inappropriate negative reference was extended to an entire group of people".

Well, you can read their report on the subject for yourself.

My concern is that this policy doesn't go far enough. After all, American Indians aren't the only group that is routinely degraded by insulting team names. As a Norwegian-American, I feel traumatized by the use of team names that insult my heritage. There are at least two teams in the NCAA who use the name "Vikings" (Portland State and Cleveland State).

1. Viking mascots are racist. No other living national group is identified as a mascot or symbol. Can you imagine the Houston Hispanics, the Washington Whities or the Boston Blacks? No one would think of appearing in black face in 2001, but because of Viking mascots, no one questions appearing in a fake Viking beard or Viking costume.
2. Use of these mascots creates a hostile environment. By singling out a particular historical group, the university is creating an environment where members of all minority groups can feel threatened. In the heat of sports rivalries, many actions take place that are inappropriate. Norwegians may be hung in effigy or mocked by the actions of opposing teams.
3. Viking mascots give the public a stereotypical and historically incorrect perception of Norwegians. Such mascots are based on Hollywood interpretations with costumes, dances, and music appropriated from the movies, not history. In reality, Viking raids ended in the Middle Ages.
4. Using Vikings as mascots has negative effects on children, including low self-esteem among Norwegian-American children and perpetuating anti-Viking sentiment among non-Norwegian-American children. One researcher noted that children in Minnesota were hostile to "real" Norwegian-American children, even telling them that they "couldn't be Norwegian because they didn't look like a Viking."
5. The helmets, costumes, and dances used by Viking mascots are misappropriations of the helmets, costumes, and dances used by Norwegians in religious ceremonies. These items have religious significance, making it all the more offensive to see them misused and mocked.
6. If another university activity were to mock a national group university officials would put an end to that activity. The emblems and stereotypical imagery of Viking mascots appear on shirts, banners and even gym floors of universities, thus giving the impression that the university does not find the image objectionable or contrary to its educational mission or diversity policy.

If you think the above is absurd, it's all taken straight from the National College Athletic Association's report on Indian mascots. I've just replaced "Indian" and "American Indian" with "Viking" and "Norwegian", "feathers" with "helmets", and a few other similar adjustments.

In their report, the NCAA apparently anticipated that someone might point out that there are sports teams with names that refer to other ethnic groups and no one seems to be objecting to those. For indeed

there are NCAA member teams with names that refer to other ethnic groups, like the Gaels, Highlanders, Spartans, Trojans, and Ragin' Cajuns. The NCAA report only noted the "Fighting Irish" as a possible analogous situation, which they quickly explained away: "Fighting Irish", they solemnly informed us, "refers to a nationality, not a race of people, and no ethnic group". Uh, but ... Their report lists as the offensive team names: "Braves, Indians, Warriors, Redmen, Chippewas, Seminoles, Fighting Illini, Choctaws, Fighting Sioux, Aztecs, Chieftains, Utes, Tribe, and Otahkians". Need we point out that of these fourteen, eight, over half -- Chippewas, Seminoles, Illini, Choctaws, Sioux, Aztecs, Utes, and Otahkians -- are nations. Apparently the NCAA believes that Indian nations are not "real" nations like the Irish, because, what?, because they're just Indians? The NCAA apparently sees white nations as clearly different: Irish, Spartans, Highlanders, those are all distinct nations, very different from each other. But Indian nations? They're all the same. I guess they figure that non-whites all look alike. This is called "not racism".

Hey, and why aren't they concerned about the Santa Barbara Gauchos and the San Diego Toreros? Those names are clearly mocking Hispanics. Aren't Hispanics entitled to dignity and respect like Indians?



Utah school district gets rid of cougar mascot because it's offensive to women

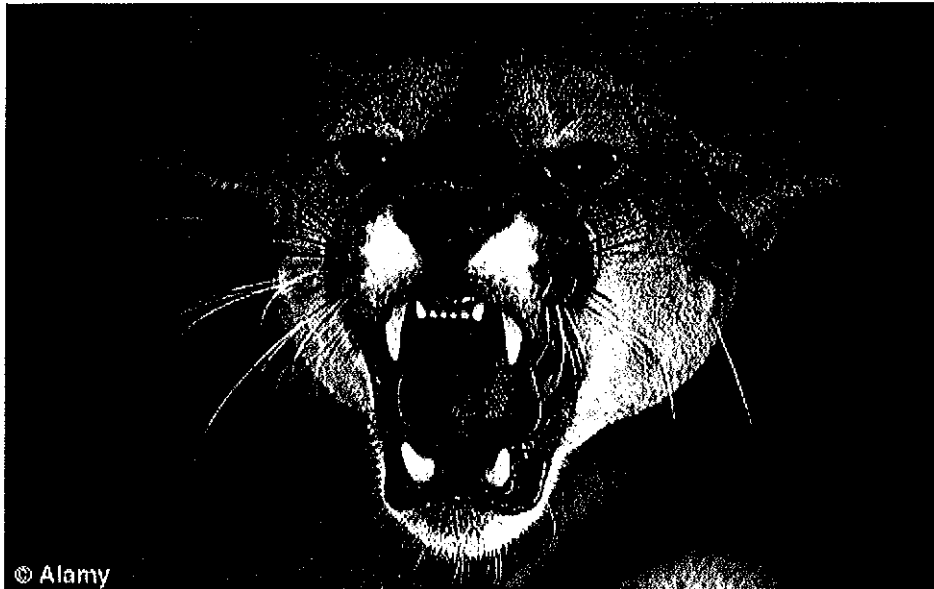
By Daily Mail Reporter

UPDATED:20:23 EST, 19 January 2012

Students in Utah may have voted to urge on their sports teams with the battle cry 'Go Cougars!'

But the school district has overruled the popular choice because it claims it would be insensitive to women.

The students were asked what they wanted to be the mascot for the new Corner Canyon High School, which is scheduled to open in Draper, Utah, next year.



Offense: A school in Utah has rejected their students' decision for a cougar mascot after worry it could be too insensitive to women

While cougars – the large mountain cats - are prevalent in Utah, the principal Mary Bailey worried people would also be reminded of the popular culture use of the word to describe sexually aggressive middle-aged women who attract younger men.

Some parents and patrons emailed and called board members, saying they were uncomfortable with the idea that their daughters on the drill team and as cheerleading squad would be called Cougars.



Misuse: The school decided that while the large mountain cats are prevalent in Utah, some may instead think of the word used to describe sexually aggressive middle-aged women who attract younger men

The Canyons Board of Education, which consisted of six men and one woman, agreed with the principal and decided to impose the name 'Charger' for the mascot.

Although 'Charger' was on the ballot, it didn't get close to as many votes as 'Cougars.'

Ballots were sent out to 4,300 kindergarten through eighth grade students in Draper communities that will feed into the school. Two hundred seventy-three wanted Cougars, 180 wanted Diamondback, 171 wanted Falcons and 141 wanted Raptors.



Chosen: Charger, a horse used in battle, was chosen for the school's mascot though it had received less votes, as seen from the recent Steven Spielberg movie War Horse

The decision came even though Brigham Young University, considered one of the country's most straight-laced colleges, uses the cougar for its mascot.

Ms. Bailey said the name 'Charger' gave the school an opportunity to have a unique mascot in Utah.

'The board said this is a brand new school and we want to unite the community. And if there's something out there that could divide it, let's not go there,' said district spokeswoman Jennifer Toomer-